

MR. P. A. JENSEN, FRIDAY HARBOR, SAN JUAN  
ISLAND, WASH., AUGUST 12, 1895.

(Interviewed by Richard Rathbun).

A. I dont see why they could not rig up a trap on the reefs somewhat after the fashion of the reef net.

Q. The main thing is the fishing rights about this island, and what has beendone in that way?

A. Well, there has not been anything done in the trap line until last year. There was a trap put in at Lopez Island and was put in out of the run of the fish entirely and did not catch any fish.

Q. Whereabouts on Lopez was it?

A. On the inside of Lopez Landing. It is on the west side of Lopez Island in Griffin Bay, a short distance above the Indian reservation; and the traps they have now are on the southwest side off Kettle Point. That is a reservation also. Their nets are not on the reservation, but just to the west of it.

Mr. Devlin has caught a great number of fish,

but he does not want anybody to know how many fish he is putting up. It is a very good location to catch salmon.

Q. Do they go up between San Juan and Lopez Island?

A. No; very few fish go through the pass. They split, and some go up one side and some the other.

Q. What rights does a man have to acquire here to set a trap?

A. Well, as near as I understand, he has to get a lease; that is, he has got a license from the State, and then he can go ahead.

Q. And this man, you say, has driven piles there?

A. Yes, I understand that some men are driving piles right in front of Devlin's trap.

Q. You dont know how far from it?

A. No. The traps should be 2400 feet apart parallel; and then they can only have them -- well, I dont know how long, but according to law they can only drive about half a mile, and then they can go 600 feet out from that and then drive another trap. This trap out here, he is only taking sockeyes now, but he catches lots of

other fish, and dog fish -- he caught more dog fish than he did salmon at first. Of course he threw them overboard. He puts his scow right alongside the pot, and of course he has to throw everything that is in the net into the scow, ~~as he cannot~~, as he cannot sort them over, as it would take too much time. The dog fish eat up the salmon a great deal in the traps.

Q. He does not can the humpbacks?

A. No, not at all. If he cannot sell them he throws them away.

Q. To-night the steamer came in with a scow. They had culled out a great many sockeye and they were on the deck of the steamer. The scow was pretty full, and perhaps had 1800 to 2000 fish there altogether.

A. He had 4,000 altogether.

Q. Well, I placed them less than that; but the main question there is the destruction of the humpbacks; the immense destruction of the humpback. Not over one in 20 or 30 of those fish in the scow were sockeyes, and the rest were humpbacks, and they were pitching them over just as fast as they could.

A. Yes, it is a great destruction, and then another thing, it knocks the fishermen out altogether. Now, their gill nets that they experimented with this season were all right, and on the Fraser River they are giving all the way from 15 to 25 cents a piece for sockeye salmon, and you know sockeye will average 10 pounds; and on the Columbia last season they paid 5 cents a pound, live weight, just as they took them from the water; and if they could make money at that, I should think these fellows here ought to make money at 25 or 40 cents for these fish, because they are just as good a fish and bring just as high a price in the market.

Q. You were speaking of the fishing places that would serve for traps; are they all taken up?

A. Well, around Lopez they are. I don't know about this island. I think that Salmon Banks is the only place they can put traps here; that is where Mr. Devlin's trap is. There was a fisherman out the other night with one of those gill nets and he caught a hundred and odd sockeye salmon in about 2 hours' drift, and you



see if they could get 25 cents apiece for those sockeyes they could make some money. This fellow here had salmon down to 5 cents apiece at first, but he is up to 10 cents now; that is buying from the Indians. There is another trap at Roche Harbor that Mr. Gross owns, and he made a contract with him to take 5,000 fish a day, and they paid 5 cents apiece; that is for that season, of sockeyes, but Gross's trap has not caught any fish.

Q. Before the cannery started here what was done with the fish that were taken?

A. There were not any taken, only what the Indians caught with the reef nets, and they only caught what they could use and sell. There was a fellow on Stewart Island, a German, who used to put up about 100 barrels every season; salt them down. And, by-the-way, Thomas Bros. have a herring industry on Waldron Island. They smoke them and box them up and ship them to 'Frisco and all around.

Q. Have you ever eaten them?

A. Oh, yes. We used to handle them for them and send them to San Francisco.

Q. Did you ever have any trouble in handling them?

A. Oh, no. They are a cheap fish, of course. Thomas is right from the Atlantic coast, and that is where he learned the business and he says these here compare very favorably with the eastern fish, if not better, because they are very fat.

Q. But there has been no salted salmon put up here before?

A. No; not here at Friday Harbor.

Q. Mr. Devlin was saying that his spring salmon he sent to Seattle.

A. Yes, he send s them to Seattle. They are sent right back east in cold storage, and they are a fine fish. They would be an elegant fish to can, but he says the light color knocks them out a in the market. I would just as soon eat them aresh as sockeye. I took one out in the country the other day and it weighed 40 lbs.

Q. Of course, the cannery is a great thing for the place here.

A. Oh, yes; that is right enough; that is for the time being. I think, however, if they allow them to put out traps it will only be a

matter of time until they have them cleaned out, as they are in the Columbia. That is where Devlin made his stake, fishing on the Columbia, and he got the fishermen jewing him down there and so he quit and came up here. They dont want to pay the poor fisherman a reasonable price for his fish, but want to get them for nothing. The silver sides and the cohos will run up soon, and one of these Indians is over here trying to get a contract with Devlin to pay him 10 cents all around for them. It is a horrible slaughter of fish, those traps are.

Q. Have you been out to these traps at all?

A. No; my brother was telling me about it.

Q. Do they come in close to the shore?

A. No; they are way out. I think the outside of the trap is over a mile from the shore, and Devlin said if he had good luck catching fish this year he was just going to run with that trap out there and enlarge his cannery.

Q. Do you do any sport fishing for salmon here?

A. Yes, with the trolling hook; we have

lots of sport.

Q. At what time?

A. The latter part of this month. They are just starting in about now.

Q. What are they?

A. That is the coho; they are the only fish that bite on the hook, except the spring salmon, but there is not so many of them around. The coho is the main one.

Q. Do you get the steelhead here?

A. I dont think. They may be steelhead here, but I dont think so. There are lots of them on the Columbia River.